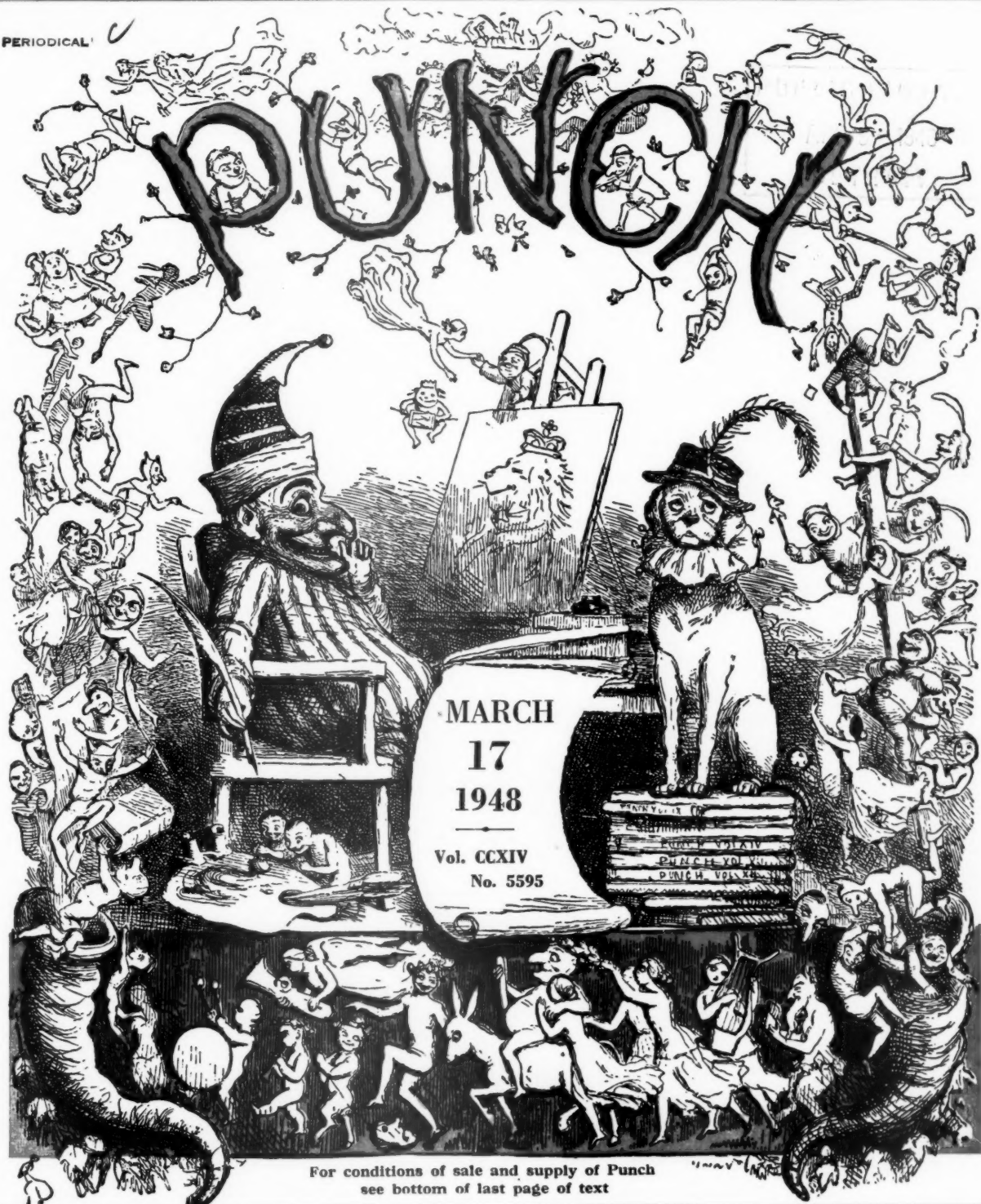


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For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

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[NCC 641X]

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Say twice a week? . . . Well it can be done if we stop exporting our money and only getting part of a pig in exchange.

There are ten delicious dishes in every pig besides the bacon and hams; but with imported bacon these stay in the country of origin — and we've paid for them.

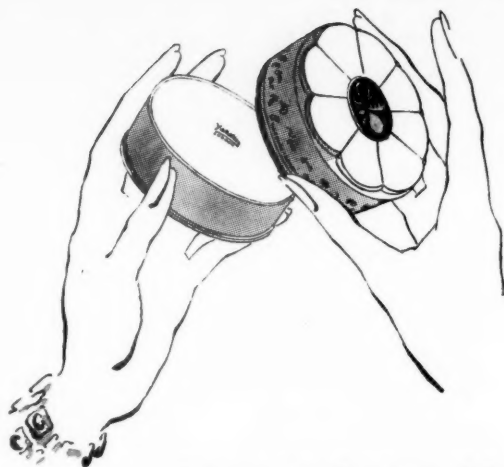
So, too, does the sow, to go on producing this harvest at the rate of eighteen or twenty a year. So if 10,000 people here kept a sow we'd have 200,000 more pigs a year — with all the other delicacies. Even, before long, your delicious Marsh Hams.

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MARSH & BAXTER LTD

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Marsh & Baxter Ltd, Brierley Hill, makers of the famous Marsh Hams



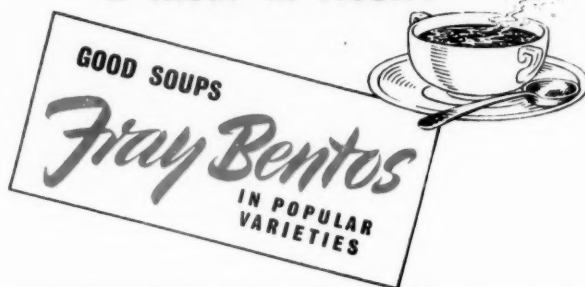
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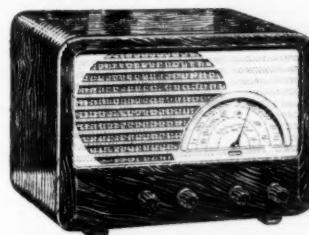
HER WORLD is on train wheels for the first time. The countryside flows past the window like a gaily-patterned green scarf. And at the end of her first railway journey — her first Kia-Ora. Never before had she tasted such a refreshing and delicious fruit drink. And mother knows that Kia-Ora is so good for children. That's why she will always ask her grocer for a bottle — it's purely delicious!

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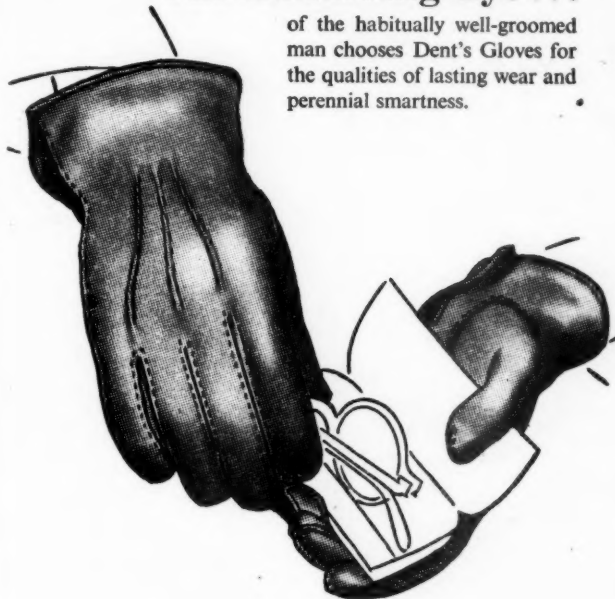


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The Discerning Eye...

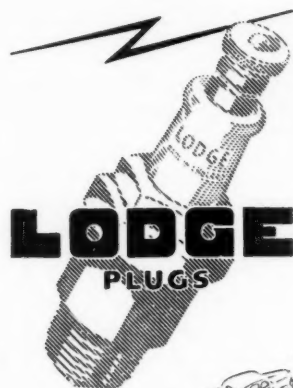
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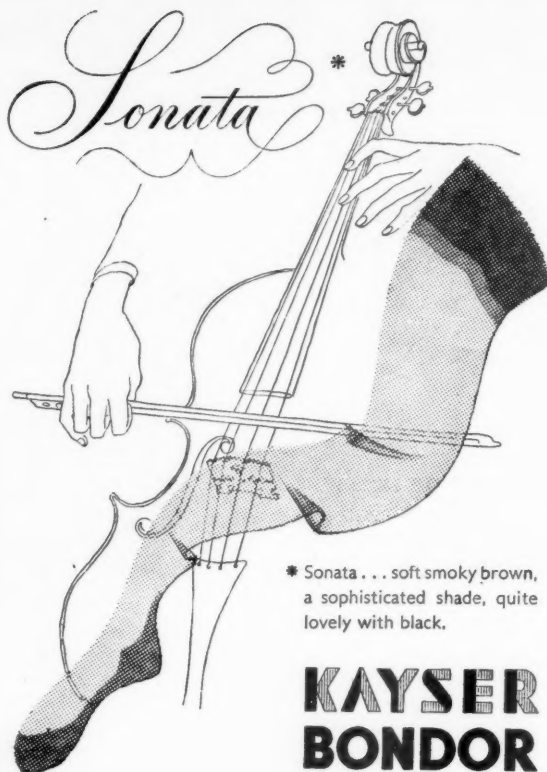
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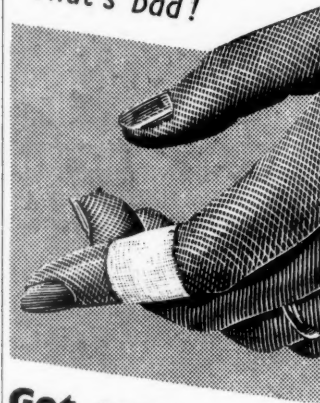
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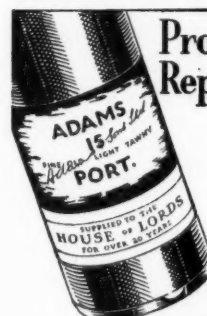
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and remember

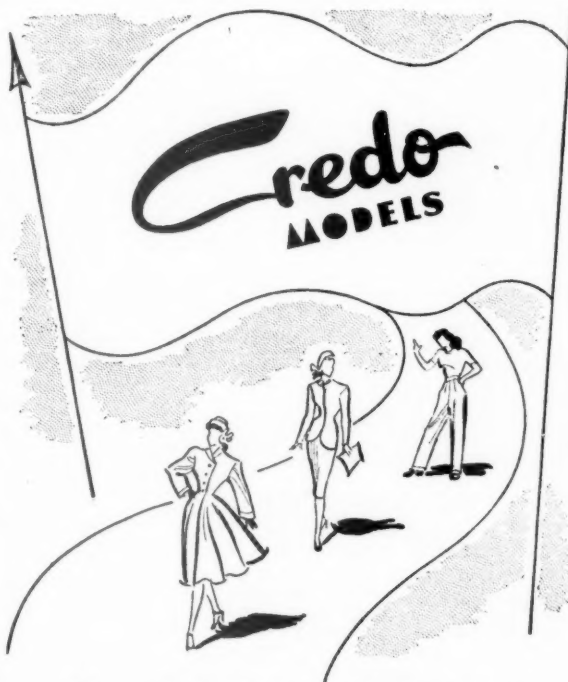
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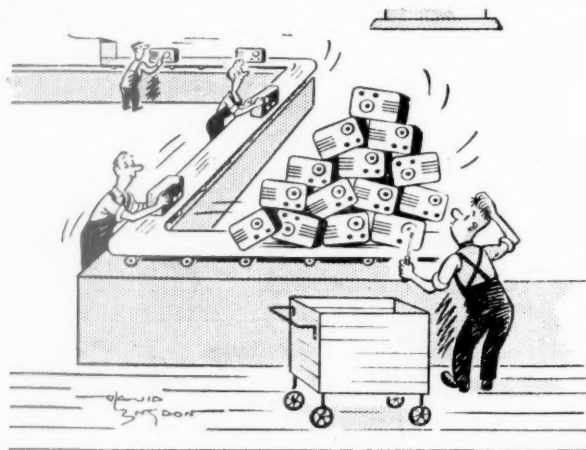


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BISCUITS
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(One pound of sweet biscuits contains 2,200 calories)

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**Yours is the best
prescription, Mr. Barratt**



Honestly, Mr. Barratt, when I see the people who come in here wanting things for colds, for rheumatism, for sleeplessness, it's sometimes on the tip of my tongue to say to them "Why don't you get yourself a pair of Barratts and go in for walking?" Circulation's half their trouble, Mr. Barratt. You've said that yourself!

Walk the Barratt way

Barratts, Northampton — and branches all over the country



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXIV No. 5595

March 17 1948

Charivaria

"THIS is a noisy Parliament," says a Press Gallery correspondent, who thinks too many Government back-benchers boo the Opposition for greeting Cabinet statements with cheers.

A coastal housing authority urges that houses should not be seen from the sea. It is of course many years since it was arranged for the sea not to be seen from houses.



"One Thousand Pounds for a Short Tory."

Advt. in Manchester paper.

With happy ending.

Among articles stolen from a West End flat was a valuable mantilla. When apprehended the thief pleaded that it was an old Spanish costume.

"Studio audiences have to bear in mind where they are," says a radio note. There is

no place, for instance, for the patron who keeps absent-mindedly leaning forward to switch off.

A toy balloon, released at Skegness in the morning, was found by a tradesman in Birmingham the same evening. No doubt he burst it quickly and enjoyed the bracing air.

"The call of the Swiss Alps is more alluring to winter sportsmen than that of the most beautiful woman in the world," asserts a writer. Come up'n ski me sometime!

It is pointed out that certain hardships result from the Government decision not to allow mid-week dog-racing. For one thing, bookmakers have to wait until Saturday for their money.

"This country must not be 'thrown to the dogs' by dishonest methods."—*Newfoundland paper.*

Certainly not—there's a right and a wrong way to do everything.

Mr. Bevan denies that as from July 5th all doctors will be required to take the Bureaucratic Oath.

A Devonshire farmer is reported to be the first person to be stung by a wasp this year. With that record gone, we are now free to concentrate on being the last.



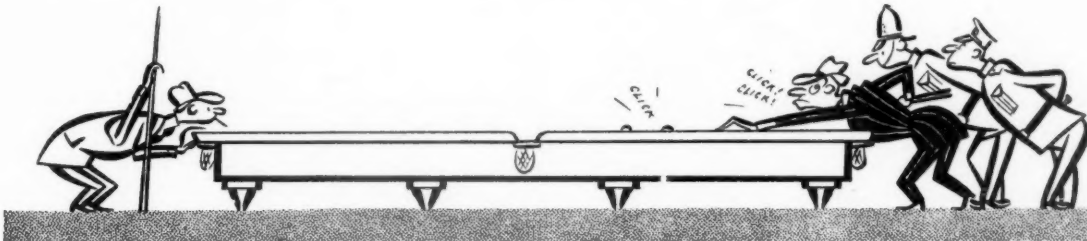
"The old proverbs are still applicable," writes an essayist; "it is only conditions that change." Nowadays, for instance, if a man builds a house in the middle of a wood, Government officials will still tread a path to his door.

Rum Affair

"BIG WHISKY HAUL BY PORT THIEVES"

"*Evening News.*"

A man wanted by the police has artificial teeth which click. It is thought that he may be attempting to conceal his identity in a billiards saloon.



Trouble in the Pacific

From H.E. the Governor, Spondulix Group, Oceania, to Secretary of State for the Colonies. Monday.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have this day delivered a protest to Jonkheer H. van Klonk. Above-named, believed to be of Dutch extraction has set up beachcombing station without licence on Crackers Island. Protest was couched in strong terms but was returned marked "Not Known." Am making tour of islands in motor launch *Harry* to show flag, overawe natives, etc.

As above. Thursday.

Sampan entered Chahiki Lagoon this A.M. flying Chinese flag surcharged "10 per cent. more," and took possession small atoll not marked on maps available here. I immediately attempted to deliver protest in M.L. *Harry*, but Chinese captain declined to accept as unable to read English. He later paddled over in catamaran with counter-protest but fell in sea while transferring to M.L. *Harry* and I took opportunity to hand him second protest couched in strong Chinese. His reply was unintelligible.

As above. Friday.

Situation deteriorating. Abyssinian flag has been hoisted on Microbe Island and two powerful dhows are now at anchor in Chahiki Lagoon. Felucca is beating to windward of leper colony established by Siamese on Knott Atoll. Have appointed my Chief Clerk, Thompson, officer i/c protests, as no longer able to cope with additional work.

Recommend immediate dispatch strongly-worded Siamese dictionary or situation may get out of control.

As above. Saturday.

Van Klonk has erected wickerwork waste-paper basket outside his illegal hut surmounted by notice "Please Put Your Protests in Here." I sent sharply-worded note, pointing out that insults to Governor, as representative of H.M. Government, tantamount to unfriendly act. Thompson reports van Klonk has now inserted "and sharply-worded Notes" after "Protests" in original notice. Consider that impasse has been reached.

Situation report as at 1600 hours Friday is subjoined.

Station, Mission, etc.	Protests Delivered.	Counter- Protests Received.
Abyssinian Ornithological Station	10	8
Siamese Lepers	14	14
Arab Fishery Squadron (per dhow)	6	7
Chinese Sampan	1	1
		(unintelligible)
Van Klonk	27	0

In addition a signal has been sent by semaphore to the felucca, requesting her captain not to enter British territorial waters without informing us in what language protests should be couched. His reply unfortunately was in a language unfamiliar to me, but it is thought to have been sharply or even strongly worded.

The discrepancy in the figures for the Abyssinian and Arab Missions is regretted. A protest intended for the latter was included in error with my ninth protest to the Abyssinian leader, Ras Wollo, who failed to notice the mistake and accordingly handed two counter-protests to my agent, Thompson. Thompson continued his round and on arriving at the Arab Squadron had perforce to

explain that the protest he had hoped to deliver had been misappropriated by the Abyssinians. Despite this, the commander of each dhow insisted on handing him a counter-protest, on the trivial plea that these had been prepared in advance and could not now be cancelled. I can find no precedent for this action and am accordingly couching an exceptionally sharp note for delivery to-morrow. On the spur of the moment Thompson (quite rightly in my opinion), having no other papers handy, left the two Abyssinian counter-protests with the Arab commanders, intending to redeem them later.

An unexpected consequence of the above has been the sinking of a prahu, or Malayan canoe, which it is understood had been borrowed by the Arabs for the purpose of delivering a sharp note to Ras Wollo. The prahu came into collision with a caique heavily loaded with protests for van Klonk, and in the confusion both note and protests were lost. As this is the first appearance of Malayan and Turkish vessels in these waters I am making further investigations.

As above. By cable. Sunday.

VESSEL NOT UNLIKE SMALL SAMBUK NOW ENTERING LAGOON STOP MIGHT BE LORCHA BUT IS LATEEN-RIGGED WITH PRONOUNCED SHEER AND FLIES STREAMER BEARING INCOMPREHENSIBLE LEGEND QUOTE JEST-PROPELLED SINCE 1841 UNQUOTE STOP WENT ABOARD IN PERSON AND HANDED PROTEST ON GENERAL GROUNDS TO CAPTAIN DESCRIPTION SHORT SLIGHT DEFORMITY LARGE HOOK NOSE STOP ACCEPTED COUNTER-PROTEST IN FORM SHARP CRACK OVER HEAD FROM BLUNT WOODEN INSTRUMENT DAMAGING PRESTIGE STOP LAGOON SERIOUSLY CONGESTED DHOWS SAMPANS BATELS SUKUNGS MAHAILAS ULAKS BAGHLAS MASHUAS CAYUKAS HOOLUNGS DHANGIS CAIQUES HURIJAS ETC STOP EGYPTIANS HAVE ISSUED STAMP FROM PHILATELIC BASE HERE SHOWING VESSEL BELIEVED DAHABEAH IN BRITISH WATERS STOP OWING SHORTAGE MATERIALS NOW COMPELLED WRITE PROTESTS ON BACK COUNTER-PROTESTS ABYSSINIAN GREEK SIAMESE ARAB TIBETAN QUERY MISSIONS PUTTING P T O ON FRONT WITH FURTHER LOSS PRESTIGE STOP THOMPSON HAS HANDED IN SHARPLY WORDED RESIGNATION SEND PENS INK PAPER CHIEF CLERK DESCRIPTION TIBETAN FLAG WICKERWORK WASTE-PAPER BASKET OR POWERFUL NAVAL UNIT IN LIEU URGENT

Secretary of State for the Colonies to Governor, Spondulix Group. By cable.

JUNK DESPATCHED.

H. F. E.

o o

In Some Sad City

THOUGH we have sought the tyrants' fall
And hurried at the victims' call;
Though we have passed with conquerors' tread
Amongst the vanquished and their dead;
Though we have hung the guilty men
And blandly said that not again
Will rogues like these be free to plot—
Yet, in a cared-for cosy cot,
To-morrow's tyrant safely sleeps,
And faintly, from the rubble heaps
Of some sad city, childish cries
Point where to-morrow's victim lies.



HOW LONG?

"If ever there was a case for Coalition . . ."



"And what are your twins hoping to be when they grow up, Mrs. Armitage?"

The Cosmic Mess

THE "Theatre Conference", at which those devils the "commercial" managers were not present in mass, carried an airy, unanimous resolution in favour of the abolition of the Censorship of Plays. The managers have since got together and passed a unanimous resolution in favour of keeping the censorship as it is. This column does not itch to have an angry row with anyone upon this subject. But, as Founder and President of the For-Heaven's-Sake-Leave-Something-Alone Club, it would be inclined to side with the managers.

This column, of course, may be exceptionally discreet and pure (that is most likely): but it has written the words for eighteen or nineteen public theatrical productions, and of all those many thousands of words the Censor has objected to two lines only. Neither of those lines, queerly enough, was the original work of this column: both were taken from real life. One was a

line actually spoken in the House of Commons, of which the Censor thought that one three-letter word had better not be spoken on the stage: the other was taken from a probably untrue "funny story" about the wife of a famous public man. There, though no names were mentioned, and no person indicated, this column thinks that, on the point of taste, the Censor was probably right: indeed, it was rather glad that there was someone like the Censor to confirm the suspicions of its better self. In the first case, this column was not persuaded that any damage would have been done by the original line; but, though it felt that a loud laugh was lost, this column did not, and does not, feel like throwing stones or passing resolutions. For one thing, the injury was so charmingly done: and, for another, the injury was not, in the event, severe. You must not think of the Censor, uncountable readers, as an unfeeling ogre inimical

to Art, or even indifferent to Art. The Censor of the Theatre is very keen on the Theatre; and goes to the Theatre. Within the limits of his duty, he does his best to assist the Theatre. Unless the line is irretrievably outrageous, he does not simply say "Out!" He sits in his office at St. James's Palace—

But perhaps, uncountable readers, you do not all know who the Censor is. Let us diverge. The Censorship of Plays is only one of the numerous duties of the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Cromer, in his day, added many to his numerous good marks in this department). He has a Comptroller and an Assistant Comptroller (both distinguished and benevolent officers), and he has two Examiners of Plays. All these gentlemen are part of the Royal Household. Therefore, no Minister is responsible for their actions: and those actions cannot be questioned in Parliament. Not long ago an Hon. Member tried to start a debate about the

Censorship of Plays "on the adjournment". He wanted the powers transferred to the Home Office. But the Deputy-Speaker stopped him almost at once. The past conduct of the Censor could not be criticized, as no Minister was responsible for him. To transfer his powers would "involve legislation", and to suggest anything that would "involve legislation" is out of order in an "adjournment" debate. (Which will show you, perhaps, how difficult the legislative life can be.) The Hon. Member and his friends demurred respectfully, but he had to resume his seat with his speech unspoken. The man Haddock (as there was some time left) then tried to chip in with some criticism of the Film Censor, who for reasons of his own had refused to allow a story (by the man Haddock) about divorce to be made into a film. But the Chair, which knows everything, said that the Film Censor was a privately-appointed person: no Minister was responsible for him either, so he could not be discussed. The debate then collapsed. All this, to some folk, seems very odd and sinister. It may be odd: but it is not very sinister. It is one of those queer English arrangements which sound crazy but work pretty well. Now let us stop diverging, and go back to this column's offending line.

The piece, by the way, was, mildly, about politics. At the Dress Parade (that is, a few days only before the first performance) the harassed manager suddenly remembered that he had forgotten to send the play to the Censor! Cold sweat ran everywhere. £12,000, at least, had been spent on the production. An essential scene was a musical debate in the Chamber of the House of Commons—a thing never done on the stage before (*Iolanthe* got as far as Palace Yard only). The Speaker's voice was heard. The Serjeant-at-Arms was seen, and was roughly handled by two Hon. Members. Questions of "privilege" might well be feared. The whole affair might be vetoed, and £12,000 go down the drain. Anyhow, the Censor might well say "This is rather late in the day. You can't hustle me!" No wonder the cold sweat. But in two days, or less, back came the script, approved, but for a single line—or rather, a single letter. Now the Censor, if he disapproves, does not content himself with disapproval. He sits in his office at St. James's Palace and thinks "How can I help these people?" In this case, the word that caused the line to be frowned upon was "set". The Censor, in a courteous letter, suggested that the character should say the word "bet" instead.

This column, it confesses, did not think that the line, as amended, would have much effect, if any. But it was so charmed by the picture of the Lord Chamberlain's officers taking so much trouble to save a single line for it that it said "By all means. It shall be so". After all, it was practically a Royal Command. And the line, as amended, got a loud laugh at every performance. This column has always thought that the Censor should have had a small royalty.

Well, now, what do the reformers want? Some would like to see no Censor at all, because, they say, there is none for books and plays. That is true enough: but if the same logic had been permitted to prevail there would never have been an Entertainment Tax—and there would be Sunday plays. There is a little difference, surely, between what can be safely read in the study, and what can be properly said in public to a large mixed audience of all ages. But, say the reformers, "there are sufficient powers in law to safeguard the public" and to deal with the undesirable when it happens. "Are there?" say the anti-abolitionists. "Variety performances are not licensed by the Lord Chamberlain: and at the moment protests are being made against some undesirabilities in an American variety show in London. They would never have got past the Lord Chamberlain in the script of a play. But up-to-date they remain. Further," they say, "take care you don't get into the position of New York, say, where there is no Censor but all the actors can be arrested at the end of the performance and taken away in very plain vans!" The reformers laugh snootily at this

fanciful suggestion, and the merry argument continues.

The longer that argument continues, the more this column will be ready to bet that in this old country, rightly or wrongly, the Total Abolitionists will lose. If they still insist on Reform, they will then have to be content with transferring the Lord Chamberlain's powers to the Home Secretary: and that does not strike this column as a good reform at all. A Government Department would be far more timid concerning a play about the House of Commons, say, or a foreign country. It *might* not have been so prompt in returning the script (in the emergency mentioned above): and who can say whether it would suggest amendments to a comic line? There would also be the danger—or the suspicion—of political or "ideological" censorship. And how tiresome it would be if Hon. Members could put down this sort of Question:

"To ask the Home Secretary whether he is aware that he cut out the only funny line in Mr. Haddock's latest drama; and will he state his reasons."

No, with great respect to the Reformers in this affair, this column suggests that they join the For-Heaven's-Sake-Leave-Something-Alone Club. A. P. H.

My Frog and I

MY eyes a-gleam with Gascon fire,
My ears a-twitch with zest,
I pick my way across the mire
Towards the sun-stained west.

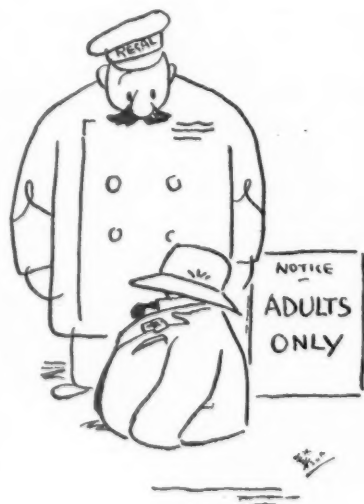
There is great beauty in the bog
Where muddy creatures play,
And I have brought my friend the frog
To point me out the way.

He joins me in a solemn croak
And looks extremely wise;
I think he does not see the joke,
But anyway he tries.

My goal is on the dry, dry land,
And when I reach that shore
My frog will wave his horny hand
And come with me no more.

And I shall turn and see him weep
And wave a sad good-bye;
For he upon the wet must leap
And I upon the dry.

For every man must seek his own,
Nor can his youth abide;
My frog and I must walk alone
That once went side by side.



At the Pictures

Unconquered—The Lady from Shanghai—Le Corbeau

EVEN though *Unconquered* (Director: CECIL B. DEMILLE) pretends to be what a solemn off-screen voice at the beginning calls "a page of British history of less than two hundred years

and fears were expressed, before last Thursday, that it would be the last we should see. Happily it won't; for genuine old-style spectacular melodramatic nonsense in Technicolor has its place, even though it isn't worth serious attention and has nothing to do with film art. If you want to waste two and a quarter hours without any mental exercise whatever, watching a Redcoats - and - Redskins massacre of the seventeen-sixties (the days when Pittsburgh was "a little village in Virginia"), why shouldn't you?

Until it trails off into a tangle of explanations at the end, *The Lady from Shanghai* (Director: ORSON WELLES) is about as entertainingly unusual a thick-ear murder melodrama as I ever came across. I was about to write "entertainingly fresh" or "refreshingly unusual"; but though these phrases might have been justified from one point of view, the idea of "freshness" with its overtones of clean brilliance, open air and vitamins would have invited challenge when applied to a story about characters most of whom are rich, self-indulgent, malicious, immoral and half insane. Even the Irish sailor hero of this piece (played by Mr. WELLES himself), who appears in several scenes as a stern moralist bitterly disrespectful to his worthless employers, is a black-browed adventurer

who has killed a man in his time . . . No, this is not one for the sweetness-and-light department; but I found that besides being absorbing in the usual way of an intelligently-made murder film it had an indescribably interesting atmosphere or flavour of its own such as the usual murder film doesn't possess. This is of course because it was made by ORSON WELLES (production and script by him, as well as direction) with all his customary dash. Personally I'd rather have Mr. WELLES using his diverse abilities on a hackneyed and unimportant subject than

any competent uninspired traditionalist trying to reconcile box-office with solid worth, though I realize that many of you wouldn't. I know that most people crave a brightly-lit screen and—even in a murder-and-action picture—an easily-understandable plot. Here you won't find either, and you will even have to listen very hard sometimes to hear what is said; yet the picture is full of miscellaneous gratification for the eye, the ear and the intelligence. The court scene particularly (with its credibly irrelevant, human interruptions) is brilliantly entertaining.

The ending, again, is the unsatisfactory thing about *Le Corbeau* (Director: HENRI-GEORGES CLOUZOT), an otherwise admirable mystery story. It deals with a plague of anonymous letters (signed "Le Corbeau") in a French town, and the detail of life and character is, as nearly always in French pictures, most beautifully handled; the weakness of the dénouement is that it seems to strain after the kind of mechanical deception and shock more suited to a conventional detective film in which no effort has been made to establish character or present convincing detail, in which the personages are cardboard symbols against a cardboard background and nothing matters but the answer to the puzzle. But it's very well worth seeing; I shall go again when I can.

As for *Idol of Paris*, advertised as made by the people responsible for *The Wicked Lady*, it can safely be left to the crowds of filmgoers who (goodness knows why) appear to regard that as a recommendation. R. M.

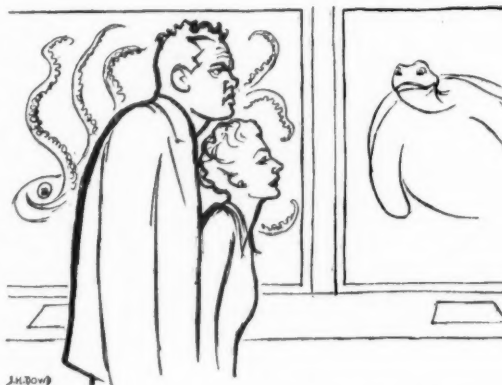


(Unconquered)

POW-WOW

Capt. Christopher Holden . . . GARY COOPER
Guyasuta BORIS KARLOFF

ago" and is punctuated with noble sentiments about Liberty and philosophizing about being Unconquered, they can't resist, when opportunity offers, playing it for laughs and dragging in hints of the "shy" situations in which platoons of feminine filmgoers delight to see GARY COOPER involved. There is even a startling moment when, the character played by Mr. COOPER having told the character played by PAULETTE GODDARD that the girl he had been going to marry liked someone else better, she replies "Better than you? She must have been crazy," and looks straight into the eye of the camera, positively asking for titters. One is almost ready to expect Bob Hope to appear and comment on the absence of Bing Crosby . . . However, this is indubitably one of the real old Hollywood Epics,



(The Lady from Shanghai)

AQUARIUM PROMENADE

Michael O'Hara ORSON WELLES
Elsa Bannister RITA HAYWORTH

Chop and Change

An Inquiry into the Degeneracy of Sheep

TO the casual eye, perhaps, degeneracy may not appear to exist. A flock of sheep in a field presents pretty much the same aspect as it presented in the 'thirties. To the thinker, however, it is clear that this ruminant mammal of the family Bovidae and genus Ovis is steadily on the downgrade. Or, if not to the thinker, it sticks out an Irish mile to the trencherman.

All keen trenchermen, in whose ranks I am proud to count myself, cannot fail to have observed that sheep have deteriorated with uncanny suddenness into a race of small-boned, scanty-fleshed midgets. The mutton chop is our yard-stick. A mere decade ago a mutton chop was a meal in itself. A normal specimen covered a standard dinner-plate and lapped over the sides in at least two places. It could easily be mistaken for a young sirloin of beef. (My inquiry into the degeneracy of cattle I am keeping for a later article.) Before such a chop was cooked one trimmed it with a lavish hand. One sliced away a few ounces of fat, and snipped off several inches of tail. Even so, when one had eaten one's fill one still had left on the plate a heap of inferior scraps the cat was proud to receive, apart from a bone able to provide a satisfying and nourishing repast to any size of dog.

The sheep of to-day find the production of such a chop a lost art. That succulent piece at the back of the bone, corresponding to the undercut in a sirloin, has vanished for ever. So has most of the flesh in the front. The modern chop consists of an ugly splinter of bone with a wisp of sinew adhering to one side. It has lost that delectable thickness. It is so thin you could pop it into a sandwich. The average man would require six or eight of these chops to feel he had had a meat meal.

It is reasonable on the face of it to suppose that malnutrition is the cause—that almost ten years of austerity has reduced the sheep to its present state. But wait! The sheep is not, and never has been, a gross eater. My authority (*circa* 1906) states that "sheep . . . do particularly well on poor, light lands," and rather nastily adds "Great Britain excels Victoria, Queensland, S. Australia, and even New Zealand in the magnitude of her flocks." Surely the most fastidious sheep would be pleased with the poorness and lightness of its land to-day?

I do not know the calorific intake required by the average sheep, but it must be small. My authority makes it plain that feeding can actually be dangerous. "Cotton-cake in excess," he warns me, "acts as a nitrogenous poison to lambs, and kills them rapidly." He is down on mangolds in the late spring, too. They start up disorders which I am afraid I can hardly go into here. You'd think that when you'd knocked a sheep off its cotton-cake and its mangolds it would be welcome to the one or two poor little items of diet left to it. But no! It has to go very steady on wheat. It daren't touch saccharin, which, I regret to say, causes intoxication. "... overfeeding . . . the presence of sand in the food* . . . all add to the death-roll."

Sheep, then, we have established, are unused to high living. Almost any sort of food is liable to upset them. It should follow that post-war Britain is just the place in which to build up a race of super-sheep. By now, sheep ought to be developing chops the size of whale-steaks. No, we must look elsewhere for our cause.

Can it then be breeding? Has there been too much intermarriage? My authority devotes a whole column to genealogy; is it not significant that all the great clans appear consistently in almost every family tree? The Spanish merino tribe, to take a case in point. Arriving here as immigrants in 1786—a period, I believe, when the mutton chop was in its heyday—the merinos promptly married into all the best families; to-day there is hardly a flock that cannot proudly point back to Castilian blood.

The Shropshires, again, contracted alliances with the Leicesters, the Cotswolds and the Southdowns. And the Shropshires—now this is important—are described as "small native county sheep." The introduction of this small native county sheep into other clans may well have been the thin end of the wedge.

I have already mentioned the Southdowns. They are implicated in another case where selectivity was not focused on added weight. My authority says "They were improved by the elder and younger Ellman of Glynde in Sussex, and have light-brown faces." I am not trying to belittle the work of either of the Ellmans, but I cannot think the production of a light-brown face a worth-while goal to work for. I have

no doubt it was ultimately attained only at the cost of a stone or two of deadweight. Colour prejudice has here been carried to unreasonable lengths. I would far rather have a two-pound chop off a black-faced sheep than a two-ounce chop off a brown-faced one. Indeed, if a sheep yielded a two-pound chop I wouldn't care if it looked like a hippogriff with zebra stripings.

The true reason for the microscopic qualities of the chop of to-day may be the ill-advised importations of Lemuel Gulliver, who, you will remember, planned to introduce into England the minute sheep indigenous to Lilliput. If he fulfilled his intentions, and the Lilliput strain has been quietly cross-breeding all this while, I suppose we must be thankful there is any meat left on a chop at all.

o o

The Limit

MY love, when you and I were newly wed,
Wild vows I made, extravagant and rare,
Satins and velvets, silk pillows for your head,
And purest gold to decorate your hair—
All these and more to fill your brimming cup,
Gay carefree laughter for your lot, said I;
But never did I promise to wash up—
Only to dry.

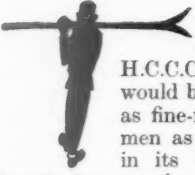
"L. W."

It was with very deep regret that we learned of the death, on March 9th, of Mr. E. H. Lacon Watson, who for the past twenty-seven years had contributed reviews to the *Punch* Booking Office. Mr. Lacon Watson devoted his life to writing, and from the time he left Cambridge in 1884, almost to the last, a stream of novels, essays, memoirs and critical articles flowed from his pen. His first review in *Punch* appeared in 1921 and his last, which he wrote with great difficulty and characteristic courage when already seriously ill, is published in this issue. He was eighty-two.

* This, of course, means no spinach.

Mr. Punch at MacMurren

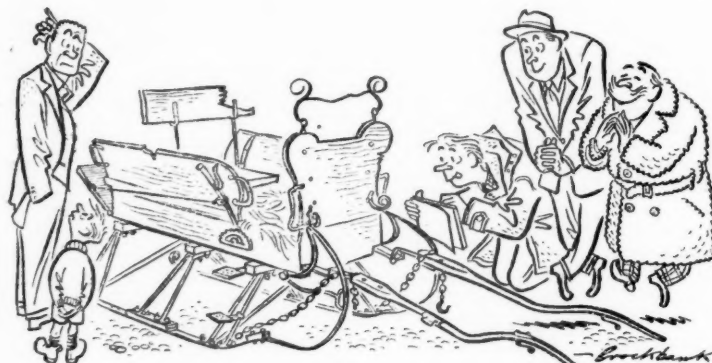
III

 O suspect the committee of the H.C.C.C. of ungallantry would be grossly unfair to as fine-minded a body of men as ever got a crick in its neck looking for inspiration to the mountains. No sooner has a new girl arrived at our ski-ing academy than she is waited on by this committee, pressing membership on her most courteously. "What's the sub?" asks the girl, if she has been carefully nurtured. "No sub at all," says the committee, grinning innocently all over its tough, muscular face. "Is there a nice badge?" "Just look!" says the committee. "It takes precedence over all other badges and is worn in the very middle of the chest." "Does it mean anything?" "Yes, indeed. You've only to flash it at the nearest male and he'll carry your skis all the way to the top, and not only your skis but your sticks and your rucksack and even your camera as well." "But what," asks the girl, warming rapidly in such an old-world atmosphere, "does H.C.C.C. stand

for?" "It stands," says the committee, putting the badge back in its pocket, "for the Helpless Clinging Creatures Club." . . . This may sound harsh medicine, but in the farseeing view of the faculty the becllobbered grind up the mountain-side is an essential training in morale. Mr. P.'s A. and I, whose

traps to-day. At No. 3 they'll all swing in from the right, when really the left would save seconds. And at No. 9 they'll think they've room for a fast turn. Well, they haven't."

To Mr. P.'s A. and me the whole thing looks unrelievedly ghastly, but when later we watch the class race



morale is incapable of improvement, have made discreet inquiries about becoming members of the club in reverse, but so far the reception hasn't been encouraging.

Slalom-racing is a major part of the curriculum up here, and those who arrive with the impression that it is nothing more than a lot of silly flags jabbed into a hill very soon learn better, as we did when we accompanied the Deputy-Headmaster while he arranged a course. His first action was to lie down on his stomach and half-shut his eyes with as much gravity as if he were on the eighteenth green in the Open. Then he sat up and made a little algebra on the back of his luncheon-packet. After that he did go so far as to stick a couple of flags into the snow, but having done so he withdrew into the distance and observed them with the utmost repugnance. "Shall I go back for the theodolite?" called Mr. P.'s A. It was an ill-timed jest, better forgotten. The D.-H. now returned and moved both flags at least three inches to the east, and we continued up the mountain, repeating the performance at points obviously selected only after the most searching reference to Pythagoras. When at length we reached the top the D.-H. looked critically down the hill and smiled his cheerful smile again. "I could set slaloms," he said, "which would turn the Kandahar grey. But we mustn't be too hard on beginners. Only two

down it we realize what wonderfully elastic stuff we skiers are made of. There are, it goes without saying, occasional contretemps. The colonel's left ski, discouraged no doubt in its clash with Mr. P.'s A. yesterday, breaks loose and disappears at a hot pace towards the distillery. The terrier Clarence, as solid a natural obstacle as could well be devised, sits down with an evil leer slap between the No. 7 flags. One or two of the class reach a speed at which steering becomes a secondary consideration, and set out, waving regretfully, for Inverness. But in the main our fellow-pupils triumph, their faces furrowed in an agony of concentration like old frost-bitten



The noble art of self-defence



purses. A casual onlooker might have felt surprise at the curious manner in which the habitual tumblers bounce. He would have been ignorant, of course, of the charming local custom by which all the rubber hot-water bottles in the hotel are at the disposal of the more notably bruised, to be inflated with air and slung round the waist, when they are said to preserve amazingly the will to live.

On our way home in the bus to-day Mr. P.'s A. and I drop off to inspect a piece of gnarled iron-work which local superstition insists is a mediæval Sassenach-trap, though some dissidents declare it is a combined harvester



... reshaping a world ...

brought over by the Vikings. Its kindly owner, however, who is much astonished to find a real artist crouching feverishly over its gaunt entrails, assures us it is a Norwegian sleigh, mysteriously translated; and we can see he is right because of the small hoist at the back which could only have been put there to ease the aching muscles of fathers of large families chronically pursued by wolves.

To lift the veil from the night-life of the Grampians, as I promised I should, is nothing but a pleasure, because I like it so much better than I did the Swiss, where I remember being obliged to fox-trot endlessly in a white shirt as if marooned off Piccadilly instead of being on holiday in the mountains. Up here the evenings are pleasingly unorganized. We sit a long time over dinner, reshaping a world fit for skiers to live in (see picture), and afterwards we coagulate fraternally over coffee and get down to the private life of the sea-trout and the exact quantity of paprika properly absorbable by an imperial goulash. To-night we have toyed with the idea of visiting the cinema—a period palace munificently equipped with a device for putting on the lights the moment the film snaps in half, which is disturbing at first, but means that you make great strides with your knitting. This plan, however, has been shelved in favour of the village dance.

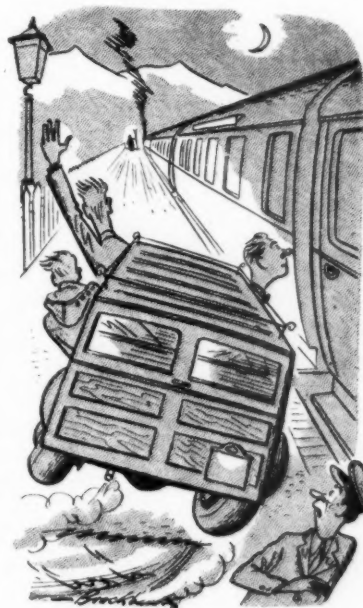
There is no shuffling nonsense about Highland choreography. The music is hearteningly live and native (though the pipes are mercifully absent) and the measures are all of marathon stature. Anything goes, from white ties to tartans, from pumps to climbing boots. In the first half-hour you lose at least seven pounds, and when you are too utterly winded to stand up you stap your vitals with strong tea and miraculous permutations of the bun. This stern regime appears to be best survived by octogenarians, but then they have been in training longer than we have and are undebilitated by the imported wobbles that pass elsewhere for dancing. The voice is kept in full exercise as well, accompanying the flailing of the legs with chesty whoops, difficult to reproduce exactly, though I found that my imitation of the feeding-cry of the female sea-lion was not embarrassingly outré.

This honest revelry makes the polite paralysis of a pocket-handkerchief of southern parquet seem vastly dull.

Back at the hotel in the small hours you would perhaps expect us to go to bed. By no means. The kitchen is raided, great quantities of tea are brewed, and Mr. P.'s A. and I are offered a week's witch-hunting in a neighbouring county by a local fakir who promises tremendous sport. And then, most engaging custom of all, we go down to the station to welcome two new boys off the 3.30 A.M. train from who knows where. It is not enough that a station-master with the hat of a group-captain and the manners of an ambassador should receive them. Our shooting-brake nuzzles right up to the windows of the express, from which two dazed bodies are reluctantly evicted. They seem not a little surprised to find a male choir in action on the platform. We tell them it is nothing, nothing at all, and a minute later they are thawing by a large fire, being suitably sustained while we interrogate them for whatever they can contribute on the private life of the goulash. Eventually the Head-master orders us brusquely to bed, just in time to get up for breakfast...

In writing of this entertaining adventure, this ample reply to the rising of the sap in the hickory, this admirably British compromise, I should probably have said earlier that March is a good month for snow, and so, often, is April.

ERIC.





"... 'E somehow managed to get a licence to entirely rebuild."

Appreciation

SINCE the day when I started my schooling
I have had one objective—to find
A lyrist whose lays were deserving the praise
Of my cultured and critical mind.
I have followed this urge—ever-pressing, obsessing—
For years with unwearying will,
But I'm forced to confess that my sum of success
is nil.

P. B. Shelley I found simply silly,
Thompson too tawdry and trite,
Donne quite over-rated, Charles Dibdin too dated,
And Milton too merry and bright.
Gray, with his churchyard, too soulful and doleful,
Lovelace too limping and lame,
Walt Whitman too rough, Campbell, Coleridge and Clough
too tame.

The rhythms of Swinburne were faulty,
The spelling of Spenser absurd;
The *Night Thoughts* of Young had been best left unsung,
Keats should not have written a word.

The "Metrical" fancies so dwelt on by Skelton
Might well have been done by his nurse,
While the couplets of Pope were as deadly as dope—
or worse.

The verses of Villon were vapid,
The voice of Verlaine rang untrue,
The lyrics of Tasso were like the Sargasso—
Excessively hard to get through.
All traces of humour were scanty in Dante,
The scansion of Petrarch was quaint,
Just to think of Racine made me turn vivid green,
and faint.

Is there no one, then, fit to be titled
My Poet Ideal? Must I
Be condemned still to seek for this genius unique
Till at last, still frustrated, I die?
Why, no! I've just found him! A rhymer sublimer
Than anyone else on my shelf.
You ask me the name of this claimant to fame?
Myself.



THE TOWER OF SAFETY

MONDAY, March 8th.—

It was Mr. JOHN DUGDALE, Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, who likened Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL to a battleship—and he ought to know. For it was Mr. DUGDALE's task to put up a smoke screen for the Admiralty to shield it from the attack of the "battleship" which sailed in majestically and calmly just as Question-time was ending.

It had been announced that Mr. CHURCHILL intended to deliver a broadside or two (possibly three or more) at the Government for its handling of the Royal Navy, and his well-known affection for the Senior Service led to the expectation that there would be a certain venom in the fusillade.

Mr. DUGDALE, who is a young Minister, faced his opponent with comparative outward calm, and, when battle commenced, even risked a few words of irony—telling Mr. CHURCHILL that he would give him a "simple lesson" on some topic. Mr. CHURCHILL neatly blunted this shaft by pointedly asking his neighbour, Commander AGNEW, what the Minister had said, and then shrugging his shoulders in a gesture of disdain.

But when the time came to send over a few broadsides Mr. CHURCHILL simply mentioned that Mr. D.'s father had been a fellow-officer of his own in a Yeomanry regiment and that he was glad to see his son doing well. Then he transferred his fire exclusively to the Admiralty and the Government—especially the Government.

However, to return to the story Mr. DUGDALE had to tell. He said that a new Ark Royal aircraft-carrier is being built and that laid-up ships are to be kept ready for service at short notice. And £9,000,000 is being spent on research into the problem of protecting surface ships from the effects of the atom-bomb.

To anticipate once more, Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, the Minister of Defence, added later that if we needed a balanced task-force to go to sea within a week or ten days it could be provided.

Mr. CHURCHILL's main criticism of the Government was on the very point of Mr. ALEXANDER's statement. He complained that the Government, by a sort of inverted sales-talk, had made it appear that Britain had no Navy, or none worth considering. The result had been that all sorts of people who thought it a good idea to make claims on a weak Britain were doing so. We were, in fact, said Mr.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, March 8th.—House of Commons: Royal Navy.

Tuesday, March 9th.—House of Lords: The Dead End Kids.

House of Commons: The Army is Reviewed.

Wednesday, March 10th.—House of Commons: Palestine—Socialist Rebels Give Trouble.

Thursday, March 11.—House of Commons: Nuts.

CHURCHILL, with a burst of alliteration, being "cheeked by Chile, abused by the Argentine and girded at by Guatemala."

And that, he said, was not good enough. In fact it was the quintessence of asininity on the Government's part. The Government, Mr. CHURCHILL went on, looking severely across at Mr. ALEXANDER, seemed to go in for concealment for concealment's sake, and liked to hide the light of our



Impressions of Parliamentarians

38. Captain Blackburn (Birmingham, King's Norton)

wonderful Navy under a bushel of White Papers and official statements.

But—drawing on his own knowledge of the facts—he proclaimed the British Navy to be as good as ever it was, ready for anything and—next to that of the United States—incomparably the strongest on the seas.

The curious thing was that the Government, which had given the world the impression that the Navy was almost a thing of the past, seemed to welcome this forthright announcement that it had not (in the language of the concert platform) made positively its last appearance.

The debate went on until 1 A.M., without adding anything very material to the subject. The Navy Estimate for the year is £153,000,000.

TUESDAY, March 9th.—While the Commons were talking about the

British Army, and Mr. SHINWELL, the War Minister, was announcing his aim to make it the finest in the world, the Lords were talking about another army. The pathetic army of Dead End Kids, or "nobody's children," which is now to be the care of the State. Their Lordships' House was no place for the hard-

hearted to-day, for the Children Bill was under debate, and a benevolent anti-Serooge Coalition was formed, in which the only inter-Party competition and rivalry seemed to be in thinking out bigger and better ways of doing good for the orphans of the storm. Lord AMULREE, Lord IDDESLEIGH, Lord MORRISON of TOTTENHAM, the Lord Chancellor himself, Lord JOWITT, all took part in the discussion, for a time under the benevolent eye of the Nation's Uncle, Mr. CHUTER EDE (known in more mundane circles as the Home Secretary) who, in future, is to look after the unwanted children.

In the Commons' debate on the Army Mr. SHINWELL made what Lord WINTERTON rightly described as an "admirable" speech, in which he set out clearly the prospect before us. The fact that, about 3.30, Members began to drift in with thick White Papers bearing the title: "Economic Survey for 1948" (and to peruse them with an air of mounting anxiety) did not detract at all from the Minister's considerable Parliamentary performance. For everybody recognizes that the perils of shot and shell are not the only ones that face a modern world.

The Minister expressed the view that, if war came, there would be no breathing space for leisurely mobilization, and announced his aim to build up the finest Regular Army in the world, ready for action on the instant, ready to hold the position until the citizens of Britain, falling into their ranks, were able to back them up with the force they had always mustered in emergency.

Lord WINTERTON, from the Opposition Front bench, gave this policy his fullest support, and, in fact, there was but little criticism in the whole of the long debate.

WEDNESDAY, March 10th.—It was, as Mr. CREECH JONES, the Colonial Secretary, said many times, only a little Bill, but the Palestine Bill caused a great to-do to-day. It is designed to give legal cover and sanction to the abandonment by Britain of the mandate over Palestine,



"But, my dear, it had to be a short Crusade on thirty-five pounds."

and to indemnify our Forces and Civil Service against legal action for anything they do "in good faith" in the process of getting out.

Mr. CREECH JONES claimed that the decision to give up having been made, the rest was automatic and (he hoped) non-contentious. But there had been a much-publicized revolt of Labour back-benchers which had led to a special meeting of the Party and (so said Rumour) a row behind locked doors. The rebels held, variously, that the Government was wrong not to support the United Nations' decision to partition Palestine, that the whole policy of the Government was wrong, and that the Bill was "totalitarian" because it offered immunity to servants of the Crown.

Mr. HOPKIN MORRIS, from the Liberal benches, mentioned that many of the brickbats flying about the heads of Ministers were composed of broken or unredeemed election promises, but Mr. STANLEY EVANS, a Labour back-bencher, called on the Government to "stand firm." To which Mr. CROSSMAN, a Party colleague, sitting by his side, retorted tartly that this seemed a curious synonym for "abdication."

Mr. MANNINGHAM BULLER announced that the Conservatives intended to regard the matter as a Labour Party private fight, and not to vote at all, and then Mr. HECTOR McNEIL wound up for the Government. He said we had paid a great deal, in money and lives, for our stewardship in Palestine, and claimed that there was nothing in our relationship with the Holy Land, or our breaking of it, of which we need be ashamed.

When the vote was taken two hundred and forty Labour Members supported the Government, thirty were against. But another hundred and twenty or so were not to be found in either Lobby.

Before the debate began, Mr. ERNEST BEVIN and Mr. CHURCHILL paid sad little tributes to one who had so often sat in the Diplomatic Gallery to listen to the proceedings of a free Parliament. Reports had come from Prague that Jan Masaryk, son of the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic, and himself Foreign Minister of that country, had thrown himself to his death from a high window of his Foreign Office. He had remained a member of the Government—as an

Independent—when it had become dominated by the Communists.

Mr. BEVIN said none knew what had really happened, except that Masaryk had died, but that his name, with that of his father, would always live in the affectionate memory of the British people.

And Mr. CHURCHILL added that "the unflinching, resolute soul" of Jan Masaryk would continue to be an inspiration to the peoples of Czechoslovakia.

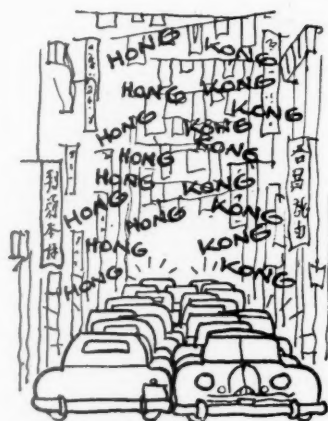
THURSDAY, March 11th.—Mr. MORRISON announced that Budget Day would coincide with the return of the House to work after the Easter recess—April 6th. But, apart from a learned discussion on ground-nuts, the day was chiefly distinguished for this dialogue:

Mr. BOYD-CARPENTER (Conservative, Kingston-upon-Thames). How permanent does a temporary appointment have to become before it becomes permanent?

Mr. GLENVIL HALL (Financial Secretary to the Treasury). A temporary appointment becomes permanent when it is made permanent.

Happy Hong Kong

(From our Correspondent East of Suez)



COMPARATIVELY few people know much about Hong Kong. For centuries it was merely one of many islands lying off the coast of China. A few fishermen and pirates lived there from time to time, without enthusiasm. Then in 1841 it became a British colony and in a hundred years was transformed into a fascinating centre of trade and shopping. In 1941, the Japanese captured the island and interned the British residents and held it until August 1945.

Coming from London, which was not even occupied, I expected to find a good deal of desolation and despair. After all, if you can only get a couple of slices of bacon a month in the heart of an Empire you would expect to find famine in a tiny outpost at the other end of the world. But in fact Hong Kong to-day must be one of the most prosperous places on earth. The streets are jammed with wonderful new cars—none more than two years old—because no vehicles survived the occupation. In a motor show-room I was offered a choice of six new cars, one at a cut price, and of course unlimited petrol.

To say that you can buy anything in the shops is an understatement. It is difficult to avoid buying everything. The merchandise flows out on to the pavements. Small boys dart about trying to sell you fireworks, silk handkerchiefs, diamond necklaces and rolls of brocade. I bought a couple

of shirts. They were waiting at the hotel when I got back—wrapped up in tissue paper—no trouble at all.

After the taxi starvation of Piccadilly, Hong Kong is ridiculous. Day or night, whenever you emerge you seem to have the choice of a vast glittering American saloon, a neat British Ten, a rickshaw, and on occasions a palanquin.

The customers in shops fall into two categories: the aboriginal residents who fuss round complaining about the patterns, and the people just out from home who stagger about touching things to see if they are real—and then almost bursting into tears.

There has been some talk about the shortage of American dollars in Britain—but Hong Kong is rolling in dollars; any official money-changer will let you have all you want—Hong Kong dollars, Singapore dollars, Chinese dollars or American dollars. The astounding thing is that the shops are not allowed to take American dollars. An American visitor has to get his money changed before he can spend it.

This prosperity is not an accident. It is partly due to the way the British fighting services helped the civilians to get to work when they got out of prison. It is partly due to the capacity of the Chinese to make the most of an

All this may sound like paradise. But there is a flaw. Prices are rising and there is not a house or flat to be had in the colony. The reason is that about a million Chinese have moved in. The rich ones have acquired homes at



any price and the poor ones sleep on the streets.

They both prefer financial stability and the rule of law to the chaos that lies twenty miles away over the border. This is not surprising, but it has made life very difficult for the wives and families of the men who have done the work and the fighting.

Re Singapore

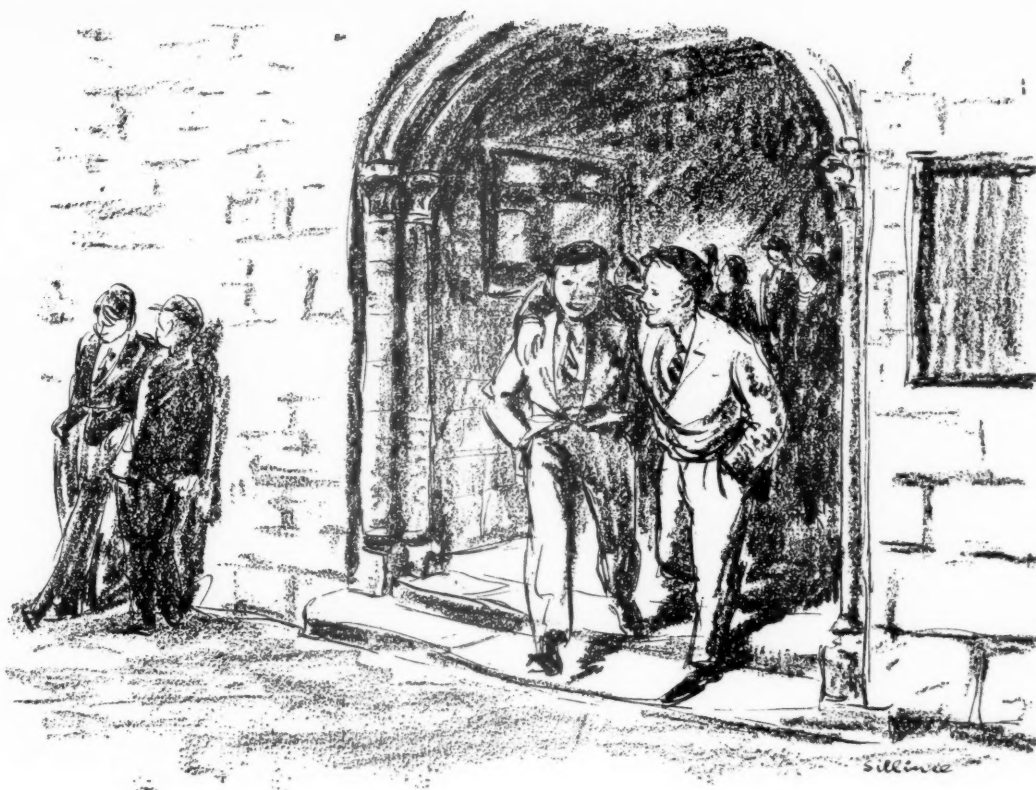
DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I am beginning to notice a runaway look in people's eyes when I work Singapore into the conversation, and am glad to find your Correspondent East of Suez boldly talking about the place as though your readers were likely to listen to him. "On the map," he says, "the Island of Singapore is almost exactly the same size as the Isle of Wight." This is precisely what the troops of the Eighteenth Division discovered. They were landed a few days before Singapore fell, given a rough description of what a Jap looked like, issued with maps and sent up to the front. They



opportunity. Certainly it has been a remarkable community effort under the British flag—and everyone is pressing on.

In the dockyards they reckon to repair a ship twice as quickly as we can in England. They have regular air services running from Kai Tak all over the Far East. A British flying boat lands in the harbour each week—six days' service.





"There's a perfectly wizard shortage of Latin Grammars this term."

found not that Singapore was approximately Ventnor, but that it *was* Ventnor, right down to the pier. But then they had been issued with maps of the Isle of Wight.

Singapore is certainly a remarkable place, and was never more remarkable than the day before it surrendered. On that day I happened to visit the Cathay building, which is a middle-sized skyscraper in the centre of the city. It must surely have been the busiest place in the whole world. The building contained a hospital, a broadcasting station, a restaurant, a corps headquarters, the residences of several staff officers and their wives, and, on the ground floor, a cinema which continued to the end to play "Six Lessons from Madame Lazonga" to packed houses. The basement was regarded by about two thousand people as the best air-raid shelter in Singapore. Among this workaday crowd the staff of corps headquarters looked ill at ease. And they were perplexed by the fact that although the Japanese had occupied half the island the telephone system

was working reasonably well throughout, so that the enemy kept on ringing up and asking in polite tones where British formations were to be found. The most bewildered man present was a major in the Veterinary Corps who had been specially flown from India that morning to certify that a shipload of three thousand goats had not got foot-and-mouth disease. I often met him during the next three and a half years when we were prisoners, and he never had another good word for a goat.

However, the strangest things about Singapore are not the momentary oddities noted by your Correspondent and myself but those that are always with it. The Chinese do not oil their wheel-barrow because the noise of the squeaking drives devils out of the garden. Ground-up tigers' whiskers are an infallible love potion. A Malay in love will write an Arabic charm on an egg, suspend the egg over his bed by a thread and, three nights in succession, set it rotating; if nothing happens to him or the egg he should win his lady. Enemies are not poisoned

with ground glass alone, since this has been found ineffective, but with ground glass and bamboo splinters mixed. Durians taste delightful and smell like rotting garbage, and if you drink brandy after eating one you are supposed to get very ill indeed. Malays sit all night betting on the number of times a bird will repeat its cry. The Chinese for "How do you do?" is "Have you eaten yet?" and the Malays, who are the politest of races, have no word that corresponds to "Thank you." There are no rabbits. And, finally, I am confident that there is a great future for an island where Chinese play Rugger, British sleep in sarongs, and all races unite in the belief that it is positively immoral to pay income tax.

Yours truly,
X.P.O.W.

"SALE TOO GOOD FOR
MANCHESTER"
Heading in "Manchester Guardian."

Aren't you being rather unkind?

At the Play

I Remember Mama (ALDWYCH)—*Burlesque* (PRINCES)

I THOUGHT it was going to be some time before I could forgive Mr. JOHN VAN DRUTEN for the chromiumed triviality of *The Voice of the Turtle*, but *I Remember Mama* at the Aldwych is big enough to wipe away any hard feeling. It is a generous play that warms the cockles of the heart, compelling honest laughter and an honest catch in the throat, and for once in a way I should be prepared to bet on its still being with us in a year.

A great many short episodes can often sap a play's strength, but here the brief scenes in the story of a struggling Norwegian family in San Francisco, borrowed from a novel by Miss KATHRYN FORBES, flow with the smoothness of a good film, dissolving in and out of each other without abruptness. They are seen in retrospect through the device of a diary, *Katrin*, the eldest daughter, linking them with a few nostalgic lines before rejoining the circle, her hair once more down her back; and this convention is so skilfully managed that it appears perfectly natural. From the evidence of the flivver which chugs right up to the door the date is about 1907.

I think the chief thing to be said about the piece is that when it is over one feels one has known the *Hansons* intimately for a long time. One hasn't merely visited them formally, as commonly happens with stage families, but stayed with them, been accepted by them and come under the spell of their individual niceness. Above all one has fallen utterly in love with *Mama*, who is of the splendid race of maternal tigresses, selfless in defence of cubs, adored by them while at the same time keeping the whole litter in a healthy state of awe. She is one of those simple, upright and yet surprisingly unconventional characters, with a quiet voice and a will of steel, not to be thwarted in pursuit of the general *Hanson* good. *Papa*, a gentle, hard-working carpenter, has learned this long ago and is content to play second fiddle to such a stimulating lead. When little *Dagmar* is ill in hospital and they won't let *Mama* see her, *Mama* seems crushed. An hour

later she is swabbing the floor beside *Dagmar's* bed, disguised as a char-woman. Every week the whole family gathers round the table in the shining sitting-room to budget *Papa's* slender payroll so that the children can acquire the sacred principles of Scandinavian thrift, and every week at the end of the session *Mama* and *Papa* publicly congratulate one another that once again they can just avoid drawing on

toast in whisky with his mistress to *Uncle Chris's* last journey. This lovable monster is played by Mr. FREDERICK VALK, whom I should have chosen for the part out of all the actors I have ever seen. Nor are *Mama's* two gorgon sisters, women straight out of the more thunderous kind of Norse legend, in coal-scuttle hats which might have been designed by Tenniel, anything but alarming. Even they, however, are no match for her superior wits.

Mr. VAN DRUTEN, in short, has turned his hand again to the drama in the home, at which nobody is more adept or understanding; and Miss CHRISTIANS has put apple-pie order into a difficult production and a fine polish, such as *Mama* would have wanted, on a large cast of whom I shall only mention Mr. GERARD HEINZ's saintly *Papa* and Miss HELEN BACKLIN's engaging *Katrin*. And also a cat of phenomenally good behaviour.

Burlesque, at the Princes, is a revival of a piece by Mr. GEORGE MANKER WATERS and Mr. ARTHUR HOPKINS which is supposed to be pretty well unsinkable because it tells the lacerating story of a comedian of genius boozing away his chances until at length—and how long it seems!—a manager of exemplary forbearance joins with the silly fellow's adoring wife to knock some sense into his addled head. This whole farrago is new to me, but I can't believe the addition of music written by a compact team of six is much help. It is one of those crudely magazine tales which might come to life fairly vividly with exceptional acting. Miss MARJORIE REYNOLDS is competent in it and no more, while that gifted young actor, Mr. BONAR COLLEANO, is so badly miscast that instead of the electric geniality of a great clown we get a far too acute intelligence.

ERIC.

Biggest Jolt Ever

"JET RECORD
HALT AT 564 M.P.H."
Headings in "Sheffield Telegraph."



[I Remember Mama]

UNCLE CHRIS BLOWS IN FOR A BARK.

<i>Papa</i>	MR. GERARD HEINZ
<i>Mama</i>	MISS MARY CHRISTIANS
<i>Uncle Chris</i>	MR. FREDERICK VALK

the balance at the bank. Not until the close do we discover this balance to have been only a brave myth typically thought up by *Mama*, convinced that a sense of security was necessary to children's welfare.

Acted superbly by Miss MARY CHRISTIANS, she dominates the play. It takes a bit of dominating. *Uncle Chris*, for one thing, a roaring bull of a man rushing about, usually half-seas over to subdue the pain in his leg, in a scarlet primeval motor-car, isn't an easy customer, except with children, for whom he lives; but *Mama* is the only member of the family allowed at his death-bed, where, trembling but determined to make him happy, she has to drink a

At the Opera

The Valkyrie (COVENT GARDEN)

THE *Valkyrie* was said to be Hitler's favourite opera, lending colour to his visions of conquering hordes of godlike *Herrenvolk*; and time was when one did feel capable of riding through the theatre roof on a winged horse to perform prodigies of heroism in defence of even a pinchbeck Valhalla at the mere sound of the *Valkyries'* cry "Hoyo—toHO! . . . Hoyo—toHO! . . . HeiaHA!" as they hurled defiance at the tearing gale in the orchestra. But now they seem very small beer, and the fact that the clouds through which they were "riding" at Covent Garden looked like a dish of sausages of very doubtful freshness (one of them had suspicious-looking bubbles at one end) had nothing to do with it. It all sounds magnificent—but it is no more exciting than a very mild air-raid. We hope that this is only a temporary effect, and that the *Nibelung* Hitler has not robbed us for ever of a thrilling experience.

This is not to say that *The Valkyrie* at Covent Garden (given in English) has not some excellent moments. The *Siegfried* and *Sieglinde* of ARTHUR CARRON and DORIS DOREE are excellently matched, and the first act is most enjoyable. Neither of these artists has a voice of heroic dimensions, but both have a beautiful, even and unforced quality that emerges triumphant even from an encounter with WAGNER's orchestral panoply. It is true that *Siegfried* and *Sieglinde* always seem an unconscionable time in recognizing the obvious—that they are brother and sister; but this is accounted for purely by musical considerations and not by the fact that they lived in Neolithic times. *Hunding* (DAVID FRANKLIN) saw the resemblance between them straight away, and besides we have it on no less authority than that of Professor Whitehead that Man's mental capacity has not improved in five thousand years—which is depressing to reflect on. But at Covent Garden this first act did not seem one moment too long, and the love-scene of *Siegfried* and *Sieglinde* was beautifully sung.

KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD, it goes almost without saying, is a superb *Brunnhilde*, and HANS HOTTER's noble baritone is heard to great effect in the rôle of *Wotan*—though Herr HOTTER's English, when it is audible through his effulgent beard, is often more than a little comic. One cannot help feeling that in his case either less English, or

still more beard, would be an improvement. The rôle of *Fricka*, *Wotan's* lawful but sorely-tried spouse, is an ungrateful one, and EDITH COATES sings it very effectively; but Miss COATES, whatever her rôle, always contrives to suggest *Carmen*, and for *Carmen* to wander into *The Valkyrie* as an outraged goddess of Respectability is, to say the least, incongruous. *Wotan's* farewell to *Brunnhilde* is most impressive, and the Fire Music sounds as splendid as ever. Let us hope that the fire-encircled height on which *Brunnhilde* sleeps, covered by her shield, will be made less perilous for *Wotan*, for many of the audience on the

first night were quite certain that he would fall off it in the dark some time before he most unfortunately did.

D. C. B.

"ONE-HALF PER CENT. RISE IN LOANS TO MUNICIPALITIES BY U.K. TREASURY."

Headline in Ceylon paper.

Well, they must take the rough with the smooth.

"INTERCHANGEABLE BODIES FOR CATTLE OR BEET."

"Commercial Motor" heading.

Can you eat it?



"Couldn't be further away, mate, could yer, unless you was on the bus in front?"

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Anatomy of Painting

So great is academic interest in the means artists use to attain their ends that one university library in the U.S.A. has initiated a collection of work-sheets—meaning rough drafts—of modern poets. With the same notion of explaining the ways of painters, Mr. CHARLES JOHNSON, official Lecturer to the National Gallery, has traced *The Growth of Twelve Masterpieces* (PHENIX HOUSE, 25/-) from a Sienese altar-piece to a Cézanne. Premising that most of the ingredients that go to make a picture are concrete—which reminds one of the reverent assessment of a Leighton as “eighty pounds’-worth of paint, not to mention man’s time laying of it on”—Mr. JOHNSON proceeds to show himself far from indifferent to the vision which, he admits, should subordinate both technical means and decorative purpose. He shows how all these attain their stature through the artist’s study of his predecessors or through his own experiments; and he has chosen twelve subjects (and sixty-one admirable illustrations) as material for the demonstration. The earliest primitives left no sketch books; but contemporary variants of identical themes show how much personality weighed before self-expression was clamorous. The most accomplished and suggestive of the studies are, so to speak, the paintiest. Titian’s “Christ and Mary Magdalene” and Ingres’ “Madame Moitessier” inspire two of the best.

H. P. E.

Decadence

Although there is a great deal of incidental interest in Dr. C. E. M. JOAD’s *Decadence* (FABER, 12/6), and the author has much that is sensible and acute to say about contemporary literature and politics, he nowhere succeeds in defining very clearly what he means by decadence. In one place he speaks of decadence as the chastened state in which nations, after an orgy of power and arrogance, perceive the workings of the moral machinery of life. In another place he takes the exactly opposite view, and defines decadence as “a sign of man’s tendency to misread his position in the universe.” This confusion is perhaps due to Dr. JOAD’s having not yet fully decided what he believes. In earlier years he was a cultured materialist; in the last decade or so he has been gravitating, not too violently, towards a belief in a non-natural order containing “values of which truth, goodness and beauty are the most eminent.” But the pagan in him still survives; and when he is feeling pagan he identifies decadence with a spiritual view of existence, when he is feeling spiritual he identifies decadence with an atrophied sense of absolute values. In this latter mood he analyses the social, moral and political effects of what he calls “dropping the object.” This analysis, often excellent, is blurred by the author’s redundant style. In the following sentence, for example, six words could be spared with advantage: “I would commend reflection on the implications of that acute saying of Hobbes.”

H. K.

Churches of the Establishment

A description of All Saints’, Oxford, as “a hat-box seen from the moth’s point of view” is typical of the distaste that churches built between 1603 and 1837 have aroused in subsequent worshippers. It is no use Mr. MARCUS WHIFFEN, their gallant and well-armed defender, maintaining that the gloom of classical churches is due to our climate. We are given our climate; but it was sheer bad luck that *Stuart*

and *Georgian Churches Outside London* (BATSFORD, 18/-) should have been gentlemanly gestures rather than shrines; and that their fittings had to consist of “an honest table”—on which Fitzgerald, one remembers, noted a crop of fungus—“pues,” galleries, a pulpit, the Ten Commandments and the Lion and the Unicorn. What enthusiasm could be aroused for these ecclesiastical specifications, the architects and craftsmen of the age bestowed; Mr. WHIFFEN bestows even more; and the discerning reader is the better for a singularly interesting book. Some of the sooty mausoleums in provincial towns are demolished. Several of their rural contemporaries have the air of convivial little meeting-houses. Jacobean left charming Renaissance detail like the façade of Staunton Harold; and Gothic, spasmodically resurgent in rococo, began to get its second wind with Sir Charles Barry. After that, with religion looking up, there were no “peace-offerings to the shade of Vitruvius.”

H. P. E.

Ford Madox Ford

In *The Last Pre-Raphaelite* (MACDONALD, 15/-) Mr. DOUGLAS GOLDRING has given an interesting and sympathetic account of Ford Madox Ford, a writer to whom Wordsworth’s “And you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love” is particularly applicable. Ford Madox Hueffer, his name at birth, grew up in the pre-Raphaelite circle. His father was a German, his mother a daughter of the painter Ford Madox Brown. In later life, Mr. GOLDRING says, he developed a retrospective dislike of the pre-Raphaelites, and longed to exchange his mixed origin and æsthetic up-bringing for the conventional advantages of unmixed English birth and an education at one of the better-known public schools. By the time he was thirty-five he was claiming that he was at Westminster, and in later life he became an old Etonian, and a captain in a Guards Regiment during the war of 1914–1918. Actually, he was a lieutenant in the Welch Regiment, and as he joined up when he was over forty and in poor health, he had no need to embellish reality. But he was fundamentally disharmonized and unsure of himself, and it must be admitted that, valiantly though Mr. GOLDRING labours on his behalf, the final impression left by this volume is unsatisfactory. Yet, as Mr. GOLDRING shows, he had some fine qualities floating loose in him, above all a real love of literature and an ardent readiness to help others to the recognition never accorded to himself.

H. K.

“What of the Night?”

The Black Laurel (MACMILLAN, 10/6), by Miss STORM JAMESON, is a most difficult book to read, partly because there are so many people in it and partly because one feels that the author (as are so many of us) is blindfold and beating with inadequate fists against an impregnable wall. This, spoken by one of her characters, is the vague creed of many—“I intend to save the world. I’m going to found an Order—but an Order which is not religious, not moral (in the vulgar sense)—never announces that it exists, is indeed never heard of. Naturally. Since only in my mind—and yours, Lucius—will it exist as an Order . . . For the first time in history, power, enough power, will be in the hands of men who want peace in the world.” And here is a thing said by a Jew, in danger of execution—“The best human justice is terribly flawed. Why? Only because it’s not love—and nothing else will keep a judge

or a great man conscious all the time that he's talking to another man. My head will be cut off as if I were a thing, not as if I were a man." The story of the Occupation in Berlin between August and October 1945 is full of the author's awareness of the false and true values of life. Jews and Germans, as well as the English, speak in a Pentecostal tongue that must remain unintelligible until the heart of all humanity suffers a change. To say that the author has bitten off more than she can chew is no ill compliment, since she has taken the future of Europe as her theme, but her book might have been more comprehensible if she had used fewer voices.

B. E. B.

Where Nothing Ever Happens

In *Beggar's Fiddle* (WINGATE, 12/6) Miss FREDA LINGSTROM brings together two widely different worlds in a long novel of considerable distinction. Their clash is no less exciting for being very quietly presented, and the people of both are drawn with much shrewdness. A young musician of genius is stranded by an accident in a small village in the Essex marshes where his quartet has been rehearsing; and there, during a convalescence protracted by idleness and despair, he marries the daughter of the doughty hostess of the pub. This is a hopeless marriage from the start, as Mrs. Mellon in her native wisdom well knows, but until it moves with Julian's fame towards final tragedy it is a lyrical love-story touching in its simplicity and blessedly free from the common clichés of romance. Julian is a worldly child, complex and unstable; Angel warm-hearted and as sound as her mother's best bitter. Their relationship is described with sympathetic precision, while the impact of bohemianism on the salted stolidity of East Anglia makes a background full of good searching peasant humour. As for Mrs. Mellon, she is a grand character, honest to the last button on her boots, and her visit to London to hear her son-in-law perform and to stay in an hotel somewhat larger than her own is an epic. The book is longer than was necessary, but life in Essex has never been hurried. Heaven forbid that it should ever be.

E. O. D. K.

Two Great Soldiers

In his pleasantly modest preface to *The Good Soldier* (MACMILLAN, 8/6), Field-Marshal Earl WAVELL admits that some of the essays reprinted in this volume may be thought a trifle out of date. Most of them, in fact, were written in the period between the two world wars: a few during the last. But, as he says, the military student may possibly still find something in these comparative veterans to induce thought. He is illuminating on the subject of generals and military genius, in which, after enumerating the many difficulties with which our modern commanders have to contend, he draws up a list, in order of merit, of those he considers the most gifted and ablest soldiers of whom he has read. He does not include many moderns in the first rank. Foch made too many blunders, though his indomitable spirit helped him to retrieve them in the end: Ludendorff seemed unable to stand up to adversity. He places Marlborough and Belisarius (an unexpected choice unless we remember our Gibbon) at the top, Wellington and Frederick the Great next, followed by Lee and Napoleon. But he confesses that this sort of classification is as unsatisfactory as attempting to determine the greatest cricketers since the days of the Hambledon heroes. These earlier essays, and his personal reminiscences of men with whom he has served or whom he came to know intimately, such as T. E. Lawrence and Orde

Wingate, are of interest to laymen as well as to soldiers: the notes on training for war, tactical exercises, and the organization of armies generally are addressed more particularly to the professional. But Lord WAVELL has a touch of humour that makes it all agreeable reading.

Almost starkly "professional" is another new book by a Field-Marshal. The name of Field-Marshal Viscount MONTGOMERY, it is safe to say, will always be associated with the Eighth Army, which he commanded with such remarkable success from the August of 1942 down to the close of 1943, when he left them with great regret to take over command of the Twenty-first Army Group then making ready in England for the invasion of Western Europe. He tells the story of its activities in *El Alamein to the River Sangro* (HUTCHINSON, 25/-)—a handsome volume containing some sixteen maps illustrating different phases of the various important battles, from the borders of Egypt through North Africa to Sicily and Italy. Few generals can have had a greater pride in his troops. He found them, in Churchill's words, "brave, but baffled." They had lost confidence in their leaders, and were sadly deficient in equipment and battle-training. In fact, when MONTGOMERY arrived in the Western Desert the atmosphere, in his own words, was all wrong. He had to face a period of reorganization and re-equipment, but he made it clear from the first that there would be no withdrawal from the Alamein Line. And, when our attack was launched his army was a splendid fighting force, well equipped, well led, and tremendously confident. The author pays a handsome tribute to the invaluable aid of the Navy and the R.A.F.—but it was his own careful planning and his gift of knowing what the enemy was intending to do that made the campaign such a triumph. His book will serve as a text-book for many future soldiers.

L. W.



"... and I've called it 'On hearing the first ornithologist in spring.'"



"But, Cyril darling, you won't ALWAYS come straight home when we are married, WILL you—you WILL stay at your club for dinner SOMETIMES?"

The Private Life of Faro Cosgreve

BUT if what you say is true, if the wireless *does* faithfully reproduce the sounds made in the studio, then the last ten years of my life have been completely wasted."

There was a trace of impatience in Faro Cosgreve's voice. We waited for him to explain.

"I'm at the B.B.C.," he went on, "in the Effects department."

In an awkward silence we laboured in pursuit of his meaning.

"Your suggestion is . . . ?" said Hinckley.

"I mean," said Cosgreve, "that for ten years I've been trying to find imitative sounds that will reproduce more realistically than the originals. You know—coconut-shells are supposed to sound more like horses' hooves than the real thing. Tobaccotin lids sound more like money than real coins. And so on."

"By Jove, he's right, y'know!"

said Mostyn. "Proves my point up to the hilt. The stuff we hear over the air isn't Beethoven at all; it's a sort of Professor Whatsisname and his Foulharmonic Orchestra's version of Beethoven!"

"Exactly!" said Cosgreve. "Over the radio a violin sounds no more like a real violin than a real thunder-clap would sound like a clap of thunder."

"So that the wireless can never hope to give us *real* music, eh?" said Hinckley.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't say that. In time we'll know as much about the instruments of the symphony orchestra as we know now about the sound of doors, trains, seagulls, cars and their gears . . . In time we may discover that for a studio string quartet to sound anything like a string quartet it should consist of Jew's harp, saw, bellows and nutmeg-grater."

"Exaggerating a bit, aren't you?" said Hinckley.

I have reproduced this fragment of conversation not because I want to steal any thunder from *The Times's* correspondence columns, but because Faro Cosgreve's story is so strange that it needs a quiet workmanlike introduction to give it credibility.

We were alone now, Faro and I, sipping our last beers.

"My job," he said, "is to make things larger than life, more real than reality, more convincing than proof or actuality."

"And so you owe your job to the technical imperfections of radio?"

"What? No, no, you've got it all wrong. The technical imperfections of the human ear are the trouble. Nothing to do with radio really. Why, it's the same with ordinary sound—in the street, in the home, everywhere. Remember, during the war, how a car back-firing used to make us jump? Why? Because it sounded more like a bomb exploding than the real thing.

Take caterwauling. You say, 'Just listen to those cats: they sound exactly like human beings, don't they?' but what you mean is that they sound *more* like human beings than human beings could ever sound like human beings, if you follow me. Otherwise the noise would have meant nothing to you."

"You mean that our ears become deaf to ordinary sounds, that only extraordinary and brilliantly imitative sounds are capable of conveying their meaning to us?" I said, trying to catch the barman's eye.

"Something like that," said Cosgreve. "Let me explain by relating a personal experience. I find the greatest possible difficulty in getting up these cold mornings, and resort to all manner of dodges to prolong my stay between the sheets. When my housekeeper calls me I answer immediately in a bright voice and tell her I'm on my way. When she calls again I stretch out my hand and sweep a little heap of coppers from my bedside table to the floor where they roll around noisily. My housekeeper imagines (anyway, she used to) that I am now up and about, in the act of pulling on my trousers. Five minutes later I get a third call which is my signal to sweep a few books from the table and break into a fitful and

mumbled version of 'Near You.' And quite recently I've discovered that a cigarette-packet scraped against the wall over my bed in wide arcs sounds much more like a man shaving than the sound of razor on cheek and chin."

"And do these ruses work every time?" I asked.

"Oh, no; Mrs. Skillett is no fool. She soon learned to retaliate. One morning I surprised her at the foot of the stairs as she was rubbing an old slipper up and down a zinc wash-board. 'Hello, what's all this, Mrs. Skillett?' I said. 'I'm scrapin' the toast, Mr. Cosgreve,' she said, smiling inscrutably.

"But this is only one of the many sound-effects she employs to lure me to the breakfast-table. One day I heard the letter-box rattle and a great weight of letters and packages cascade to the mat. I raced downstairs to find only one unsealed letter on my plate. 'Why, Mrs. Skillett,' I said, 'I'll swear I heard a whole lot of...' Something about her calm stance and steady eyes made me pause. 'There was only just the one letter, Mr. Cosgreve,' she said. Later I discovered that her props for this deception were eight old newspapers and three pocket-books."

"You seem to be very evenly matched, you and Mrs. Skillett," I said.

"Not really," said Cosgreve. "After all, there's my much wider experience,

isn't there? Still, next week promises to be very interesting. We're both making experiments. I'm going to find out whether a heavy boot tied to the flex over my bed and set swinging against the wall will sound anything like me doing my early morning exercises."

"And Mrs. Skillett?"

"Ah, I'm not sure, but I think she's discovered some way of amplifying the sound of a half-rasher of bacon sizzling in the pan."

I thanked Cosgreve for his story. Then we drank up and shuffled out into the dark night and the rain. We shook hands and for a few seconds I watched him clearing the footpath in front of him with a sound more like the growling of a ferocious wolfhound than the real thing. HOD.

Pathology

ONE word far more than most gives me neuralgia

And that's *nostalgic*, and its mate nostalgia;

I own the word itself's nostalgia, very;

It's sick for home within the dictionary.



"And this, ladies, is the model kitchen."

Paper-Clips

THE paper-clip crisis is now little, if anything, short of catastrophic. I have tried literally, well, practically, every stationer's in London; at any rate, I have been to quite a few. They haven't a paper-clip in stock.

Some have reluctantly admitted the possession of a few paper-fasteners. With these I have been kindly but firm. It is not the same thing at all. By a clip one naturally means the little white-metallic object of bent wire, which *slips* on and *grasps* the papers together. The fastener is normally brass-coloured and has points which inevitably bend as the attempt is made to thrust them through a bundle of papers. When it has been straightened out again it has to be pushed through each sheet separately. This is a tedious process and results in mangled corners to the sheets and a far from tidy alignment at the edges. If a clip is required, then very definitely a fastener will not do. I insist, it is not "more or less the same thing."

I have been, I trust, silently and pityingly sardonic with those who have offered me rubber bands. These they have in plenty. What possible connection they can have with my request for paper-clips I can hardly imagine. True, in a sense, they will hold sheets of paper together. But if anyone can seriously maintain that their manner of doing so has any resemblance to the particular and precise function of the paper-clip he is, I submit, either obtuse or frantic to the point of desperation.

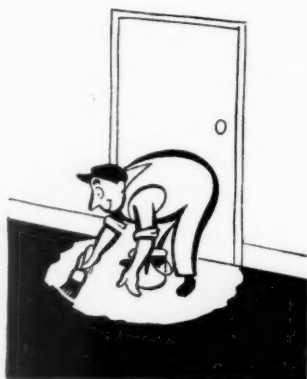
Let it be emphatically stated and clearly understood that the paper-clip is indispensable. You cannot, in the whimsical Army manner, *improvise* anything which will faintly resemble the authentic paper-clip in the crisp and satisfying execution of its duty. Cherish what fond memories you may from your schooldays of your elaborate foldings of corners, with or without dexterous counter-foldings of middle portions artfully torn; you will be hard put to it to recapture the art of these devices now, and should you do so, it will only be to obtain a belated sympathy with your schoolmaster's point of view with regard to them.

Perhaps you think you could fashion a paper-clip from a piece of wire. You may try. I am inwardly convulsed at the imagined spectacle of your frustration. Why, the genuine article itself, when once straightened out, can rarely be made to function again with any faint degree of satisfaction. You may re-bend it, admittedly, but you have a peculiar and rare genius if your clip hasn't a new and irritating twist. When you observe this, desist from your efforts while yet sane.

The straightened-out paper-clip has manifold uses in its own right, and cannot easily be replaced in them by anything normally available to ordinary mortals unendowed with technical paraphernalia. I used, in better days, to carry a straightened-out clip in my wallet. I used this for prodding out obstructions in my pipe. A pipe-cleaner is too long to carry easily

in the pocket without getting bent; also it lacks the rigidity necessary to deal with a firm obstruction. The straightened-out paper-clip is entirely suitable for this purpose in all respects. It does of course in the process become nicotined up, and the cleaning of it for return to the pocket presents a problem, but a simple one compared with that of unblocking a pipe by any other method. You will not easily lay your hands on an instrument which has all the qualifications for the job. There are numerous other problems of the prodding and fishing-out varieties which can only be satisfactorily dealt with by means of the paper-clip straightened out, either completely or partially.

That this necessary instrument is now no longer available in our shops is nothing, if anything, short of calamitous. The result, in the fraying of nerves alone, does not bear calm contemplation. Attempt at your peril to justify the shortage. I shall not rest satisfied until the *Government does something about it*. Argue, if it gives you any comfort, that paper-clips are important items in our export trade; I shall retort that rubber bands (pshaw!) are necessarily items in our imports which we are so anxious to dispense with. And what is more, if the normal business and procedure of our commercial life continues to be hampered and harassed in this manner, who can say that we shall very much longer be in a condition to export anything?



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March

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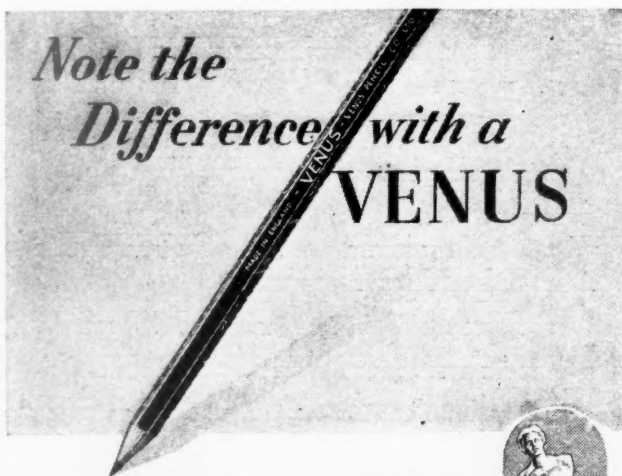
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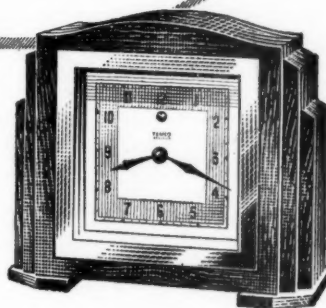
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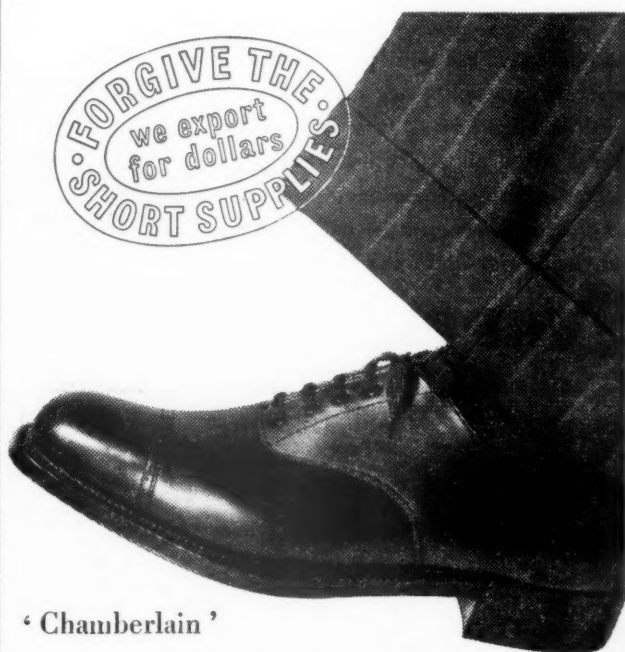
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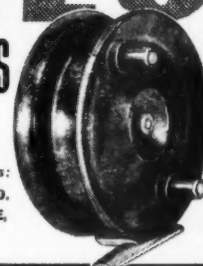
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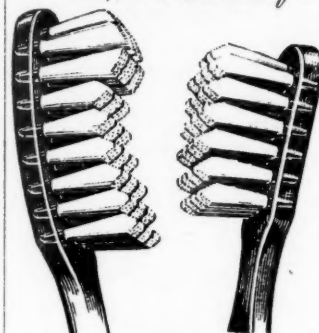
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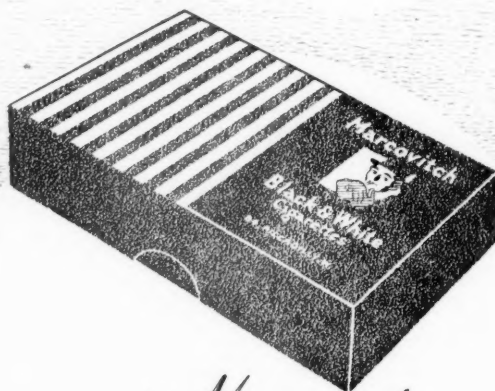
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